



It's a common rule of thumb to worm horses at the change of each season.

Autumn rolls around, and it's time to treat. Then again in winter, spring and summer – simple, routine, and easy to stick to.

While that approach is largely correct, it can lead to some parasites being missed and may also increase the risk of resistance over time.

Moving from autumn into winter, things can feel like they're slowing down. Pasture growth drops off, temperatures cool, and overall activity seems lower.

But parasite pressure doesn't disappear – it just changes.

Some worms persist on pasture, while others remain inside the horse in different stages of their lifecycle. So even if you're not seeing obvious signs, there can still be a burden there ticking along in the background.

During autumn, and into winter, the key worms to watch for are small strongyles, tapeworms and, in some cases, roundworms – each behaving slightly differently as conditions cool.

Which worms' matter through autumn and winter?



Small strongyles are one of the biggest considerations at this time of year. Over the cooler months, they can sit in an encysted (dormant) stage within the gut lining. They're not always causing obvious issues immediately, but they can build up and emerge later.

Roundworms tend to be more of a concern in younger horses but are still worth keeping in mind depending on your age groups.

Tapeworms are a bit different again. Unlike strongyles and roundworms, horses don't pick up tapeworms directly from pasture. Instead, they're infected by ingesting small pasture mites (oribatid mites) that act as an intermediate host. This means their lifecycle is slower and more seasonal, and they tend to build up over time rather than spike quickly.

Because of this, tapeworms are often targeted at specific times of year – with autumn being a common point to address them.

### Why product choice matters

To target encysted small strongyles, actives such as moxidectin or specific fenbendazole programs are commonly used.

For tapeworm, actives such as praziquantel or pyrantel (at the correct dose) are typically used, often as part of an autumn treatment.

For roundworms, particularly in younger horses, actives such as fenbendazole or pyrantel may be used depending on the situation.



For broader parasite control, combination actives may be used where multiple parasites are being targeted at once.

During the autumn to winter period, the focus is often on managing existing burdens and targeting parasites that persist through cooler conditions.

This is where products such as iO Fenbender, iO Equiduo Liquid and iO Blade can play a role within a broader worming program, as they contain actives suited to targeting common parasites during this time of year.

Product choice should always be guided by what you're looking to target, along with faecal egg counts, seasonal conditions and your overall worming approach. If you require further assistance, consult your local veterinarian.

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Winter performance is often determined well before conditions tighten.

As pasture quality declines and energy demand increases, cattle can begin to lose condition quickly if not managed early. While feed availability is a key part of the picture, it's not the only factor influencing how animals perform through the colder months.

Condition, nutrition and trace mineral status all play a role — and the impacts aren't always immediately obvious.



## Preparation matters

Cattle heading into winter in lighter condition are more vulnerable to production losses, slower growth and reduced reproductive performance.

For breeders, this can affect conception rates and recovery post-calving. For growing cattle, it can mean setbacks that take time — and cost — to recover from.

By the time condition visibly declines, it can be difficult to regain ground. That's why early preparation is key.

## Pasture quality and intake

As temperatures drop, pasture growth slows and feed quality typically declines. Even where feed appears adequate, it may not meet the nutritional requirements of the animal.

Energy and protein are often the primary focus, but trace minerals can also become limiting — particularly in systems where pasture composition or seasonal conditions reduce availability.

## The role of trace minerals

Trace minerals such as zinc, copper, manganese and selenium are involved in a range of biological functions, including immune response, reproduction and metabolic processes.

Deficiencies are not always obvious. In many cases, they are subclinical — meaning animals may appear normal but are not performing at their full



potential.

These hidden gaps can become more significant during periods of increased demand, such as pregnancy, lactation or growth, and during seasonal transitions like the lead into winter.

### Key times

The lead-up to winter is a useful time to review cattle health and nutrition, particularly for:

- Weaners and growing cattle
- Pregnant and lactating cows
- Cattle under environmental or nutritional stress

Taking a proactive approach can help maintain condition and support performance through the colder months.

### Supporting cattle through seasonal change

Managing cattle through winter is rarely about a single input. It's a combination of feed planning, monitoring condition and addressing any nutritional gaps before they become limiting.

Where trace mineral status may be a factor, targeted supplementation can play a role alongside broader nutrition strategies.

Products such as Acti-Trace and Acti-Trace with B12 provide a convenient option for delivering essential trace minerals and Vitamin B12 during key production stages or periods of increased demand.



Winter brings its challenges, but the impact on cattle performance is largely shaped by decisions made in the lead-up.

By focusing on condition, nutrition and trace mineral status early, producers can better position their cattle to maintain performance and recover more effectively when conditions improve.

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Drying off is more than just the end of a lactation period — it's a key opportunity to reset cows and set them up for the next production cycle.

How cows are managed during this time can influence body condition, recovery, and ultimately reproductive performance in the following season.

### **Why drying off matters**

The drying off period allows cows to redirect energy away from milk production and toward maintenance, recovery and preparing for the next joining.

Cows that remain under nutritional pressure for too long can struggle to regain condition, which may impact:

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- Conception rates
  - Calving outcomes
  - Overall productivity in the next cycle

Managing this transition well helps support both animal welfare and long-term performance.

#### Condition is key

Body condition score (BCS) is one of the most important factors to monitor when drying off.

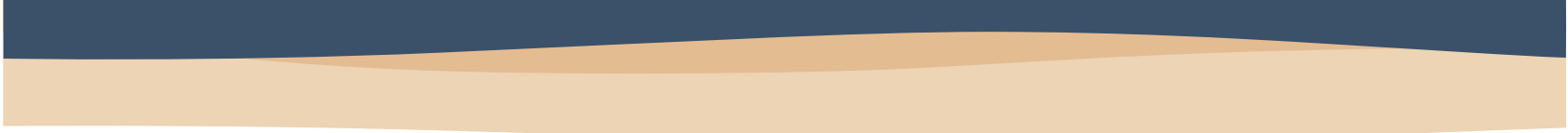
Cows that are too light at drying off can find it difficult to regain condition, particularly as pasture quality declines heading into winter. On the other hand, cows in good condition are better positioned to maintain performance and cycle effectively at joining.

Early intervention is critical — it's far easier to maintain condition than to rebuild it later.

#### Nutrition through the transition

As cows dry off, their nutritional requirements change, but they don't disappear.

Energy and protein remain important, particularly where pasture quality is declining. At the same time, trace minerals continue to play a role in supporting:

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- reproductive function
  - immune response
  - overall metabolic health

Subclinical deficiencies can limit performance without obvious signs, making them easy to overlook during this period.

### Supporting recovery and fertility

The period following drying off is closely linked to reproductive performance in the next joining.

Ensuring cows have adequate nutrition and mineral status supports:

- recovery post-lactation
- return to cycling
- improved conception outcomes

This is particularly important in seasonal systems where timing and fertility have a direct impact on overall herd productivity.

### Taking a practical approach

Drying off should be viewed as part of a broader management strategy, rather than a single event.



Monitoring condition, reviewing feed availability and considering nutritional gaps can help ensure cows are well supported through this transition.

Where trace mineral status may be limiting, targeted supplementation can be used alongside feed planning to support recovery and performance.

Products such as Acti-Trace and Acti-Trace with B12 provide a convenient option for delivering key trace minerals and Vitamin B12 during this period.

The drying off period is an opportunity to set the foundation for the next season.

By focusing on condition, nutrition and recovery, producers can position their cattle for improved fertility and performance when it matters most.

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Vitamin B12 is involved in energy metabolism, helping cattle convert nutrients from feed into usable energy.

It works closely with trace minerals such as cobalt, which is required for B12 production in the rumen. When this process is limited, energy utilisation can be affected.



## Why deficiency isn't always obvious

Unlike some nutritional issues, Vitamin B12 deficiency is often subclinical. Cattle may appear healthy, but performance may be below expectations.

This can include:

- reduced weight gain
- lower feed efficiency
- slower recovery during challenging periods

## When to consider Vitamin B12 supplementation

Vitamin B12 supplementation may be worth considering during periods of increased demand or stress, including:

### Weaning

Weaners are adapting to dietary and environmental changes, which can impact intake and energy balance.

### Joining and early pregnancy

Energy requirements increase, and maintaining condition is important for reproductive performance.

### Calving and lactation

Cows face increased nutritional demand, and any limitations in energy utilisation can have a greater impact.



## Seasonal transitions

Changes in pasture quality – particularly heading into winter – can influence nutrient intake and availability.

## Periods of stress

Transport, environmental conditions or feed changes can all place additional pressure on cattle.

## Using B12 as part of a broader approach

Vitamin B12 supplementation is often used alongside trace mineral support, rather than as a standalone solution.

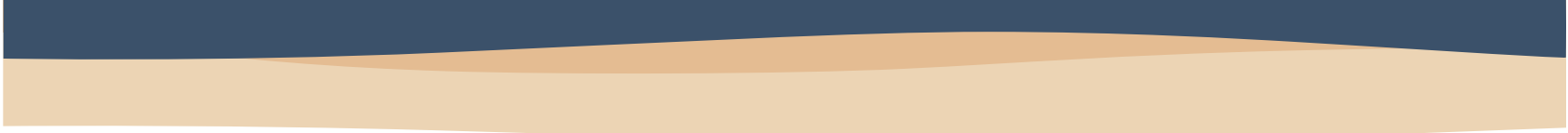
A targeted approach allows supplementation to be timed around periods where cattle are most likely to benefit.

## Choosing the right option

Not every situation requires additional Vitamin B12, but understanding when it may be useful allows for more informed decision-making.

In operations where trace mineral status and energy demand are both considerations, combining Vitamin B12 with trace mineral supplementation can provide a more complete approach.

Products such as Acti-Trace with B12 offer a convenient way to deliver both trace minerals and Vitamin B12 in a single injection during key production stages.



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Across Australia, internal parasite control in both sheep and cattle is changing. The shift toward triple-active (“3-way”) drenches is not driven by marketing or fashion, but by necessity. On many properties, single- and dual-active drenches no longer provide reliable or predictable control.

Anthelmintic resistance is now well established in sheep parasites and is increasingly recognised in cattle systems. Resistance already exists at low levels in most worm populations. Drenching does not create resistance; it selects for resistant worms. Once resistance becomes established, it does not reverse. This has forced a change in how drenches are selected and why combination products now sit at the centre of modern parasite control programs.

### Why triple actives work

Triple-active drenches combine three unrelated chemical families, typically a macrocyclic lactone, a benzimidazole and levamisole. Each attacks worms in a different way. For a worm to survive treatment, it must already carry resistance to all three actives at the same time.

This is the key advantage. Field experience and modelling show that combination drenches dramatically reduce the number of worms that survive treatment compared with single-active products. Triple actives are effective against susceptible worms and against populations with single or dual resistance, which now describes many Australian sheep flocks and is increasingly relevant in cattle, particularly for *Cooperia* and other gastrointestinal nematodes. When used appropriately, they also slow the rate at which resistance genes accumulate in the worm population.

Low-volume triple-active formulations add a further practical benefit, particularly in cattle. Accurate dosing is easier, under-dosing is less likely, and consistency across variable liveweights improves. Given that under-dosing is a well-recognised driver of resistance in both sheep and cattle, this alone is a meaningful advantage.



## What triple actives do not do

Triple-active drenches are not a silver bullet. They do not remove resistance risk, replace management, or justify routine blanket drenching in either species.

Misuse can still accelerate resistance. Frequent whole-mob treatments, drenching when worm burdens are low, repeated reliance on the same combination, or moving stock immediately onto low-contamination paddocks all increase selection pressure. These principles apply equally to sheep and cattle, even though clinical disease may be less obvious in adult cattle. Triple actives are powerful tools, but they remain tools, not strategies.

## Refugia – the concept that protects drench life

Refugia refers to the proportion of the worm population that is not exposed to a drench at the time of treatment. This includes worms in untreated animals, eggs and larvae on pasture, and life stages not affected by the product.

Refugia matters because susceptible worms dilute resistant survivors after drenching. When refugia is large, resistance develops slowly. When refugia is small or eliminated, resistance develops rapidly. Preserving refugia is the single most important factor in slowing resistance, regardless of which drench is used.

## Why faecal egg counts matter more than ever

Faecal egg counts (FECs or WECs) underpin evidence-based parasite control in both species. They answer two essential questions: is treatment needed, and did the treatment work?

Pre-drench testing helps avoid unnecessary treatments and preserves refugia. Post-drench egg counts, or formal faecal egg count reduction tests,



confirm whether a drench remains effective on a property. Without post-treatment checks, resistance can develop silently until control fails.

Some retailers now offer egg counts before a sale. The next step is normalising post-treatment follow-up, particularly in cattle systems where resistance can be overlooked until production losses occur.

### Looking ahead

The move to triple-active drenches reflects a broader shift away from product-led decisions toward system-based parasite management. The future lies in combining appropriate chemistry with testing, refugia management, grazing decisions and informed advice.

Used thoughtfully, triple-active drenches protect sheep and cattle performance today while buying time against resistance tomorrow. That balance — productivity now and sustainability long term — is the real power of three.

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Liver fluke is one of the more complex and often overlooked parasite challenges in livestock. In the right conditions, infections can build over time and impact animal performance before obvious signs appear. For producers in higher rainfall or irrigated areas, understanding fluke risk is critical.

Unlike many gastrointestinal worms, liver fluke has a more complex lifecycle that relies on specific environmental factors, making seasonal awareness and timing critical for effective management.



Knowing when to act can make a significant difference to livestock health and productivity.

### Why liver fluke risk increases in autumn

Liver fluke requires an intermediate host, typically freshwater snails, to complete its lifecycle. These snails thrive in wet areas such as drainage lines, irrigated pastures and low-lying paddocks.

Periods of rainfall and mild temperatures support both snail populations and the development of infective fluke larvae. As livestock graze these areas, they ingest the larvae, which then migrate through the animal's liver as they mature.

By autumn, livestock may have been exposed to fluke over several months, particularly in higher rainfall regions or properties with persistent wet areas. This is often when the impact on animal health and performance becomes more apparent.

### Which livestock are affected by liver fluke?

Liver fluke can affect a range of grazing livestock, most commonly sheep, cattle and goats. A large range of species are susceptible, although the impact can vary depending on the level of infection and environmental conditions.

Sheep are generally more sensitive to fluke burdens and may show more obvious production impacts, while cattle can carry infections for longer periods, often with more subtle signs.

In regions where conditions favour fluke development, both sheep and cattle should be considered at risk, particularly when grazing wet or low-lying



areas.

### Recognising the signs of liver fluke

Liver fluke infections can affect livestock in both acute and chronic forms, with symptoms varying depending on the level of infestation. Producers may observe:

- reduced weight gain or poor growth
- loss of body condition
- anaemia (pale gums or eyelids)
- lethargy or reduced grazing activity
- in some cases, sudden losses in heavily affected animals

Because these signs can develop gradually, liver fluke may go unnoticed until production impacts become significant.

### The impact on livestock performance

Liver fluke affects the liver, an organ critical to metabolism, nutrient processing and overall health. Damage caused by migrating fluke can reduce feed efficiency and compromise growth and productivity

In production systems, this can lead to lower weight gains, reduced fertility and overall declines in animal performance. In some cases, secondary complications may arise due to reduced immunity and general condition.



In some cases, liver fluke can lead to serious health issues and may be fatal if left untreated. Heavy infections, particularly in sheep, can cause significant liver damage and blood loss, which may result in sudden deaths.

### **Monitoring and managing fluke risk**

Effective liver fluke control relies on understanding both the environmental risk and the lifecycle of the parasite. Identifying high-risk areas on farm, such as wet paddocks or irrigation zones, can help guide management decisions.

Diagnostic tools, including faecal egg counts and liver fluke testing, can assist in determining the presence and severity of infection. Where treatment is required, timing plays an important role. Treating too early or too late in the lifecycle can reduce effectiveness, so aligning treatments with seasonal risk is key.

### **Treatment options within a parasite management program**

Effective liver fluke control requires a considered, multi-factored approach that considers seasonal conditions, pasture risk and the lifecycle of the parasite.

On properties where fluke is present, a management strategy may include monitoring livestock through testing, identifying high-risk paddocks, fencing off high risk wet areas and applying treatments at key times of the year. Strategic treatments can help reduce fluke burdens within livestock while also limiting pasture contamination and ongoing reinfection.

Because liver fluke develops through multiple stages within the animal, selecting a treatment that targets the stages present at the time of application is important. In autumn, livestock are often carrying a mix of early immature, immature and adult fluke, which can influence both product choice and timing.



Products such as [HRC Abatech Ultra Pour-On](#) are designed to target all three stages of liver fluke, including early immature, immature and adult fluke. This can be particularly valuable during higher-risk periods when multiple stages may be present at once.

Selecting the right treatment and applying it at the appropriate time can help reduce fluke burdens, support livestock performance and form part of a broader parasite management strategy.

If you have any concerns regarding your livestock and liver fluke, please consult your veterinarian.

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Across many Australian sheep-producing regions, autumn marks a period when internal parasite burdens can begin to build. After months of warm conditions and grazing pressure, worm populations on pasture may reach levels where they begin to affect flock performance.

Internal parasites are a constant challenge in grazing systems. Their impact is not always immediately visible, but over time they can reduce weight gain, compromise wool production and affect overall flock productivity. Understanding how worm burdens develop through the season is an important part of maintaining animal health and managing risk within a flock.

Why autumn is a key period for worm pressure

The lifecycle of most gastrointestinal worms relies heavily on environmental conditions. Warm temperatures and periods of moisture allow eggs



passed in manure to develop into infective larvae on pasture.

As sheep graze, they ingest these larvae, allowing the cycle to continue within the animal. Over the course of summer and early autumn this process can lead to increasing levels of contamination in grazing areas.

By autumn, sheep may have been exposed to several generations of worms. This accumulation can result in higher parasite burdens within the flock, particularly in young or growing sheep that have not yet developed strong immunity.

### Recognising the signs of worm burdens

The effects of internal parasites often appear gradually. In many cases the first signs are reduced productivity rather than obvious illness.

Producers may notice:

- scouring in affected sheep
- reduced weight gain or poor growth rates
- declining body condition
- dull or poor-quality wool
- reduced appetite or general thriftiness

Young sheep and lambs are typically more vulnerable, although adult animals can also be affected when parasite pressure becomes significant.

### Managing parasite pressure in grazing systems

Effective parasite control rarely relies on a single intervention. Monitoring flock performance, observing pasture conditions and responding to



seasonal changes all play a role in managing worm burdens.

Treatment decisions are often based on a combination of experience, observation and diagnostic testing. Faecal egg counts can provide useful insight into parasite levels and help determine whether treatment is required.

When treatment is necessary, worm drenches and vaccinations remain an important tool in reducing parasite burdens and supporting flock performance.

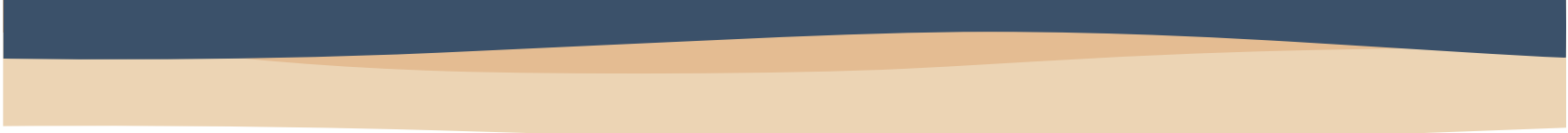
Treatment options within a parasite management program

A range of drench options are available to assist with parasite control in sheep. These products vary in their active ingredients and spectrum of activity, allowing producers to select treatments that suit their flock's needs and the parasite challenges present on their property.

Choosing the right drench and applying it at the appropriate time can help reduce worm burdens and support flock performance. Treatment decisions should always consider seasonal conditions, parasite pressure and long-term resistance management.

Independents Own have selection of sheep worm treatments designed to support parasite control in Australian grazing systems. You can explore the Independents Own sheep worming range [here](#)

For further advice please consult your local veterinarian.



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Internal parasites are a common challenge in grazing systems, particularly as seasonal conditions change. Worm burdens often build gradually, meaning the early signs can be subtle and easy to overlook.

Recognising potential parasite problems early can help producers respond quickly and minimise the impact on flock performance.

**1. Scouring**

Scouring, or diarrhoea, is one of the most commonly recognised indicators of worm burdens in sheep. While scouring can have several causes, including dietary changes, persistent or widespread scouring within a mob can indicate the presence of gastrointestinal parasites.

**2. Reduced weight gain**

Parasites compete with the animal for nutrients, which can reduce feed efficiency and growth rates. Sheep affected by worm burdens may appear slow to finish or may struggle to maintain body condition despite adequate feed availability.

**3. Poor condition and thriftiness**

Sheep carrying significant worm burdens may show a general decline in condition. This can include weight loss, a dull fleece, or a lack of overall vigour.



## Monitoring flock health

Because parasite challenges can develop over time, monitoring livestock condition and pasture pressure remains important throughout the grazing season. Diagnostic tools such as faecal egg counts can help determine whether worm burdens are present and if treatment may be required.

If producers suspect worm issues within a flock, a veterinarian can assist with advice on monitoring and parasite management options.

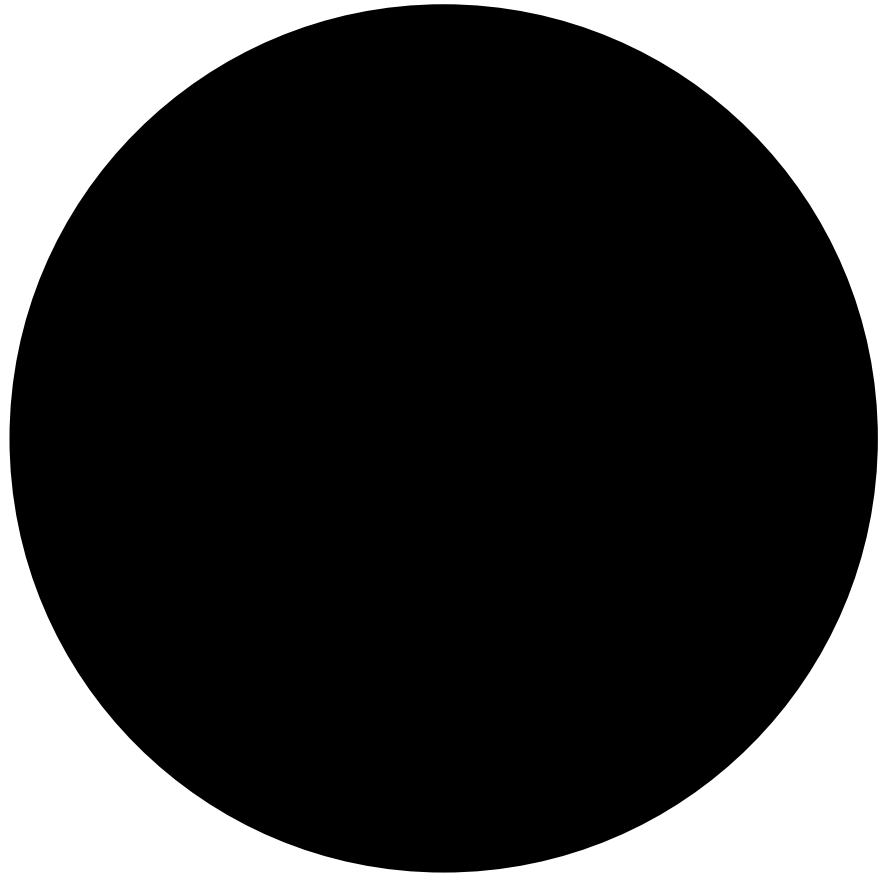
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Seasonal conditions play a major role in the development of internal parasites in grazing livestock. For many sheep producers, autumn represents a period when worm burdens can begin to increase after several months of exposure on pasture.

Understanding why parasite pressure often rises during this time can help producers make more informed decisions about monitoring and treatment.

## The worm lifecycle on pasture

Most gastrointestinal worms rely on pasture to complete their lifecycle. Eggs passed in manure develop into larvae that migrate onto surrounding pasture where they can be ingested by grazing sheep. Warm temperatures and periods of moisture provide favourable conditions for this development, allowing larvae to accumulate in grazing areas over time



### Exposure builds through the season

By the time autumn arrives, sheep may have been grazing contaminated pasture for several months. This exposure can result in increasing parasite burdens within the flock, particularly where grazing pressure has been high or where young sheep are present.



## Monitoring and management

Observation of livestock condition, pasture management and diagnostic tools such as faecal egg counts can all assist in identifying parasite challenges. Where treatment is required, a range of worm control options are available through rural retailers to help manage parasite burdens and support flock performance.

For further advice please consult your local veterinarian